

I support media diversity
Dear members of the FCC:

In 20 years as a teacher I've watched the effect the media have on our students from middle school through college, as well as the culture as a whole. A gradual homogenization of American media began with the advent of national television networks and made it difficult, but still possible, for quality local programming to compete for the eyes and ears of their audience.

Since deregulation began during the Reagan years, the media have become more homogenous than ever. The voices of huge corporate conglomerates--a beast of business about which Jefferson and other founding fathers warned us--are drowning out the independent voices speaking within their communities and offering an alternative view to that of mega-corporations.

Nowadays you pull off the interstate almost anywhere in American and you see the same fast-food feeding stations: McDonalds, Burger King, Wendy's, Arby's, and so on. You can't tell if you're in Portland, Oregon, or Portland, Maine--in Albany, New York, or Albany, Georgia.

This sameness food is bad news for local restaurants run by real people serving cuisine from their region and culture, but it does not threaten the survival of the nation. The equivalent limited menus on the airwaves and newspapers and other media threaten the very existence of our republic.

Democracy is based on the belief that the truth will ultimately prevail over lies, that good information will, in the long run, win out over bad information. But for this to happen, we must have a rich variety of individual voices, each seeking and speaking the truth as they see it. If we have only one chorus, singing the same song in harmony, conducted by corporate boards of directors, then the truth may not appear.

Further deregulation will silence more and more independent voices (as it has already done in book and magazine publishing) so that nobody will be heard except the megacorporations. The more this continues, the poorer will be our chance of sustaining this experiment in self-government that we call the United States of America.

We need in our country a wide range of diverse voices, voices of the people, by the people, and for the people. If we do not sustain a media environment in which such voices can be heard, we are likely to perish from the earth.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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